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ABSTRACT

Recent social studies research has been lacking in qualitative examinations of life in secondary social studies classrooms. Although there have been a number of suggestions as to how instruction in high school classrooms should proceed, it is rare to find a detailed description of how students actually are taught in such classrooms. This study was intended as an attempt to document and describe as accurately as possible what does go on in some secondary level social studies classrooms, and in particular to try to identify those techniques and behaviors of teachers that are particularly effective in helping students learn. Four 11th grade U.S. History classes, located in a large urban high school (grades 9-12) on the west coast of the United States, were observed unobtrusively at least twice a week over a 4-month period. A daily log was kept in which the activities, comments, and behaviors of students and teacher were recorded. In addition, discussion flow-charts, performance checklists, and rating scales were prepared and used when appropriate. Students were given questionnaires in which they were asked to describe the frequency with which various activities were used in the classroom. Lastly, in-depth interviews, using a structured interview schedule form, were conducted with each teacher as well as a randomly selected sample of five students. This research is not intended to suggest that what goes on in the four examined classrooms is typical; rather, the intent is to convey a thorough portrait of these four particular classrooms. A 24-item list of references is included. (DB)

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A PORTRAIT OF FOUR SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES

(With Special Attention Paid to the Identification of Teaching Techniques and Behaviors That Contribute to Student Learning

(Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association April, 1992)

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A PORTRAIT OF FOUR SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES
(With Special Attention Paid to the Identification of Teaching Techniques and Behaviors That Contribute to Student Learning)[1]

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For two decades now, there have been repeated calls for social studies researchers to increase their use of interpretive and naturalistic research paradigms to study, understand, and explain what happens in social studies classrooms (Armento, 1986; Palonsky, 1987; Shaver & Larkins, 1973). The actual use of such paradigms by social studies educators compared to other forms of research, however, remains rare.

A review of the social studies research literature for the past ten years revealed only a few naturalistic studies of life in secondary social studies classrooms. Encouragingly, the number of qualitative studies at the elementary level appears to be on the increase (e.g., Adler, 1984; Brophy, 1992; Carter & Hacker, 1988; Levstik, 1986; McCutcheon, 1981; McGowan, et al., 1990; Stodolsky, 1988; Stodolsky, et al., 1991), but those which deal with teaching at the secondary level rermain comparatively few (Cornett, 1990; McNeil, 1986; Onosko, 1991; Palonsky, 1986).

Although there have been a number of suggestions as to how instruction in high school classrooms *should* proceed, only occasionally does one find a detailed description of how students actually *are* taught in such classrooms--i.e., what actually *does* occur on a day-to-day basis, how instruction takes place, what assignments are given and for what purpose, what materials are used, what techniques and strategies are used, and the like. It was my intent in this study, therefore, to try to document and describe as

[1] I would like to thank my colleague at San Francisco State University, Norm Wallen, for his assistance in the completion of this study.

accurately as possible what *does* go on in some secondary level social studies classrooms, and in particular to try and identify those techniques and behaviors of teachers that are particularly effective in helping students learn.

Method

Theoretical underpinnings. In keeping with a characteristic of much qualitative research, that is, an emphasis on *grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I began this study without any specific questions or hypotheses in mind, preferring to study the data inductively in order to reveal unanticipated outcomes. To the best of my ability, I tried to put aside specific expectations and preconceptions so as to minimize biasing what might be observed. As insights and theoretical constructs began to emerge from observations and field notes, my observations became more focused. Certain hypotheses, grounded in the data, therefore, did emerge. The nature of these hypotheses will be described and discussed later in the paper.[2]

Procedures. Four eleventh grade U.S. History classes, located in a large urban high school (grades 9-12) on the west coast of the United States, were observed unobtrusively at least two times per week by myself and a colleague over a four month period. The classes were very similar in several respects (see Table 1): (a) class size; (b) average IQ score; (c) average GPAs based on grades received over the previous two years; (d) textbooks used;[3] (e) gender distribution; (f) ethnic breakdown; (g) characteristics of the rooms in which

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[2] This study represents only the initial stage of a much larger body of work. My intent is to conduct a series of observations in a number of different high schools, in hopes that I can isolate and identify specific techniques and behaviors of effective teachers who work in different settings and with different types of students, that novice teachers can learn to use or employ in order to improve their effectiveness.

[3] All classes used the text by Robert P. Green, Laura L. Becker, & Robert E. Coviello. (1986). *The american tradition*. Columbus, OH: Bell & Howell.

instruction occurred;[4] (h) grade level; and (i) the nature of the subject matter taught.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Four Social Studies Classes Observed Compared with the School as a Whole

Characteristic	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D	School
Subject taught	U.S. History	U.S. History	U.S. History	U.S History	Variety of social studies offerings
Grade Level	11	11	11	11	9-12
Class size	35	33	36	33	33
Average IQ score	111	115	112	109	112
GPA	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.3
Gender					
Female	21(60.0%)	18(54.5%)	24(67.0%)	21(63.6%)	57.2%
Male	14(40.0%)	15(45.5%)	12(33.0%)	12(36.4%)	42.8%
Ethnicbreakdown*					
Spanish speaking	8.6%	8.3%	10.4%	7.5%	7.3%
Other white	14.3%	18.4%	14.3%	19.2%	17.0%
Black	2.8%	0.0%	3.0%	6.0%	4.0%
Chinese	34.3%	40.0%	37.0%	32.0%	42.3%
Japanese	11.4%	3.0%	5.0%	6.0%	2.0%
Korean	5.6%	5.0%	4.0%	3.0%	3.5%
American Indian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Filipino	11.4%	11.1%	12.3%	14.1%	10.4%
Other non-white	11.4%	15.2%	13.0%	11.2%	13.3%

*Columns may not total 100% due to rounding

The classes differed essentially in five ways: (a) age and gender of the teacher; (b) time of day the class met; (c) supplementary materials available

[4] All rooms were on the second floor, well-lit, but not particularly spacious. Teachers B and D had arranged the desks so that there were three six-desk rows facing each other. Windows took up one entire wall of each room, with a blackboard taking up two other walls. The fourth wall was occupied by a bulletin board. All four rooms were copiously and colorfully decorated with a host of flags, wall maps, picures, photos, of U.S. presidents, murals, charts, diagrams, timelines, etc.

(i.e., additional books, films, equipment, etc.); (d) activities in which the students spent the majority of their time while in class; and (e) techniques and behaviors of the teacher.[5]

After discussing the project with the chair and members of the social studies department (n=23), I contacted each of the four teachers chosen and discussed the nature of the project with both them and their students to receive their permission to observe. The four teachers chosen had each been described, by the school principal, the department chair, and their social studies colleagues, as one of the "best" teachers in the school. Three of the teachers were male, one was female.

Both students and teachers were assured of confidentiality, and that the results of the observations would be shared with them. Upon receiving the permission of the teachers and students, I spent at least two days a week observing each class over a four month period during the Spring semester of 1992.[6]

Data Sources

Data were obtained from each class by means of a variety of methods and instruments. A daily log was kept in which I recorded the activities, comments, and behaviors of students and teacher. In addition, discussion flow-charts, performance checklists, and rating scales were prepared and used

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[5] All four teachers used a variety of teaching methodologies, although certain techniques were used more frequently by some than others. Teachers B and D were (and identified themselves as being) lecturers; Teacher C used the Socratic method almost exclusively; while Teacher A used at least two or more techniques (including small group discussions, case studies, slide shows, recitation, large group discussion, and lecture-interspersed-with-questions) during every class session observed.

[6] Each class was observed twice per week by myself, and at least once additionally by my colleague, Professor Norm Wallen, for a minimum total of three observations per week. Inter-observer agreement equaled .90 for almost all class periods observed. Where we differed concerning perceptions of a particular class, subsequent discussion revealed considerable agreement overall, with disagreement on only a few particular details.

when appropriate. Questionnaires which asked students to indicate whether or not various activities (e.g., weekly discussion of current events; student-led discussions; small group work) occurred in their classroom over the course of the semester were administered at the end of the observation period. Students were given a list of activities and asked to indicate whether the activity was or was not typical of what went on in their classroom (i.e., occurred frequently) during the semester and then, for those activities which were indicated as being typical, to rate the quality of the activity.

Lastly in-depth interviews, using a structured interview schedule form, were conducted with each teacher as well as with a randomly selected sample of five students from each class. Both teachers and students were asked to describe the teacher's style of teaching, what they thought the teacher was trying to do through his or her teaching, and their assessment of the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom, as well as what factors contributed to or limited that effectiveness. Each interview was tape recorded and lasted for about one hour. To summarize:

•Both teachers and students were observed to identify the teachers' style of instruction; the sorts of comments teachers made to students and vice-versa; interaction among students and between students and teacher; and the nature and frequency of various classroom activities. All observation periods were approximately 45 minutes in length and were of the total class. The observers did not attempt to make a comprehensive record of classroom discourse, but rather to describe specific teacher behaviors and techniques, along with student reactions to such behaviors. Those behaviors and techniques used repeatedly were checked against teacher and student perceptions.

•All four teachers were interviewed at length (for approximately one hour) about their philosophy of teaching; their course objectives; what they thought they did particularly well; their means of evaluation; their teaching style; their perceived shortcomings; how they thought they were perceived by students; and what they would change about themselves were they able to do so. The purpose of the interviews was not only to allow each teacher to describe his or her own teaching style, but also to check the observer's perceptions against those of the teacher.

•Students were interviewed to determine their perceptions of their teacher; what they thought their teacher did well; their perception of the teacher's shortcomings; what they liked and disliked about the class, and why.

•Documents (lesson plans, tests, teacher's notes, student notebooks, written assignments, products such as maps, etc.) were examined to assess the relationship (or lack thereof) between the teacher's assignments and his or her lesson and course objectives.

The primary purpose of the data collection was to describe each teacher's style and method of teaching with particular focus on

•those aspects that appeared to be of most significance to the teacher's success, and

•specific techniques that hopefully could be adopted, or at least tried, by novice teachers with a modest amount of training. Consistency across the three sources of data was determined through the process of triangulation in order to verify identified techniques.

Results

The responses of the participants to the questions asked on the questionnaires and during the interviews, the contents of the observers' notes, and the data collected through use of the other instruments were summarized, categorized and analyzed. A fascinating portrait of these high school social studies classes, and the students and teachers who taught and learned within them, emerged from the investigation. A synopsis of each teacher's style is given below, followed by a description of the techniques they used, and an analysis of their similarities and differences.

Teacher A

Teacher A is a 52 year old Caucasian male who has been teaching for 20 years. His students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities, divided by gender into roughly two-thirds females and one-third males. All students are eleventh graders who are required in this district to take the course. The text is hardcover, commercially available, produced by a national publisher, with a 1988 copyright; in addition, multi-page handouts on various topics are provided about once or twice a week.

Assignments consist of case studies (based on actual historical events) that students are to analyze in writing and in small group discussions; oral and written reports; written answers to questions from the text; mapwork; and individual and small group presentations. Occasionally, a small scale research project that involves some data collection (e.g., analyzing the activities of a government official as reported in the media) is assigned for in-class or take-home completion and discussion. Each student must also complete a a term project in which they research a "decade" (the 1960s, 1970s, etc.) of their choice.

Class activities center around teacher-student (and occasionally student-student) discussions, debates and small group work, frequent use of films, filmstrips and slides (of his own making), and, occasionally, lectures by the teacher. Grading is based on bi-weekly quizzes, homework assignments, the term project, unit tests, and a final examination.

Course objectives (stated at the outset and given to the students in writing) include:

- to present the causes and effects of events in United States History in a clear, concise, and meaningful manner;
- to inform students about the origin and developments of this nation's government, economy, and culture;
- to equip students with the critical thinking skills that will enable them to make reasoned, objective judgments about historical interpretations and contemporary issues; and
- to help students understand the nature and significance of traditional American values.

Beyond these, Teacher A offered the following remark during his interview:

> I want to get my students excited about history and learning, to love it as much as I do. I intend to give them a taste of how exciting history really can be. There is so much to learn that is interesting, but it all depends on how it is presented to students. Variety is the key--even a chocolate soda for a chocolate freak gets pretty deadly if you have one every 15 minutes. So I try to mix up the way I present information--slides one day, case study for part of a period, then some discussion, then maybe I will talk, you know? Mix it up.

In keeping with this remark, it was observed that Teacher A spends a part of every class period relating the subject matter under study to current events and/or daily life happenings of his students.

Classroom atmosphere. Teacher A places considerable emphasis on creating a non-threatening, supportive atmosphere. He deliberately tries to create an informal situation in which students feel free to ask questions and to risk peer reaction. Both observational and interview data indicate that he is successful in this regard. In addition, in general, he is successful in his attempts to convince students that they can master course content, and that history really is interesting. His success in this regard was borne out in the student interviews as all of the students interviewed said they liked history, and that much of this was due to the Teacher A's efforts. As one student remarked:

> He doesn't just go by the book. He gives you lots of examples from real life; he brings in his slides and pictures that he has taken all over the world. We see films and filmstrips, and hear records about the times, about the music and what people were saying, and play games, and work in groups, do case comparisons--all kinds of stuff. I didn't ever like history, but I do now. Mr. (Teacher A) is the kind of teacher whose classes you want to take again and again. He knows an awful lot, and he makes it fascinating to me.

A major portion of Teacher A's success must be attributed to his overall demeanor. He is friendly, patient, non-threatening, and has a good sense of humor. Allthough he runs a no-nonsense classroom, he also is approachable and human. This last characteristic requires clarification. Although he conveys mastery of the subject matter and confidence as a

teacher, he sometimes will make an obvious mistake (get a name or date wrong), or not be able to find something on a map, or pretend to forget something, and then ask the students to help him out. This creates a sense of togetherness, that the whole class and the teacher are in the business of learning together. His behavior at these times appears to reinforce the attitude that everyone can learn, yet also that anyone can make a mistake. When interviewed, he stated that he is continually learning more himself about the topics that are covered in the course. Another characteristic observed and mentioned during an interview with one student as being of primary importance is that Teacher A continually displays respect for each student in his class.

In addition to the desirable atmosphere created by Teacher A, five other factors seem important to his success: (a) his ability to explain things clearly; (b) his listening skills as demonstrated by his responses to students; (c) his patience as evidenced by his willingness to explain things over and over again when students do not understand; (d) the variety and quality of the class activities he designs (to which he devotes considerable time);[7] and (e) the amount of timely feedback he provides to students.[8] In addition, Teacher A has considerable command of the subject matter[9] and is able to relate it to a variety of daily life examples. Finally, he possesses an unusually high degree of energy. He is almost constantly in motion while class is in session.

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[7] When interviewed, Teacher A remarked that he gets to school every morning about 6:15 a.m. (his first class begins at 7:35 a.m.), and that he spends three hours after school, plus most of Saturday, grading papers and preparing for forthcoming classes.

[8] He continually moves around the room, watching his students as he holds a discussion. This constant movement, he says, allows him to see when a student is unclear about a topic or an idea, and to respond appropriately.

[9] As several of his students and colleagues remarked during the formal interviews and in informal conversations, Teacher A "knows a lot;" "is very well-informed;" "is always learning new things;" etc.

Evaluation. Teacher A gives a quiz about every ten days or so, consisting of about 20 multiple-choice and true-false questions. These quizzes test primarily for recall of information read about or discussed in class. In addition, he gives a unit test, consisting of about 35 objective (true-false, multiple-choice, some matching) questions, and two to three essay questions, from which students select one to write about. The objective questions test for recall and recognition of information, but the essay questions require higher level thinking, requiring explanation of events, analysis of outcomes, synthesis of viewpoints, and the like. He also gains some idea of what and how much they are learning by questioning them on important points he has been stressing in class.[10]

Teacher A was asked to rate himself on a number of polar adjectives, using the semantic differential technique deveoped some years ago by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1967). Teacher A's students were also asked to rate him on the same set of adjectives. A comparison of the two ratings (the student ratings represent the class average on each attribute) are shown in Figure 1 on the next page.

As is evident from Figure 1, Teacher A's perception of himself is shared by his students. Both Teacher A and his students rated him at or near the positive end of the differential on all of the variables shown. The only noticeable difference was that he rated himself a bit lower on sense of humor and encouraging student thinking, and a bit higher on varying class activities, than did his students.

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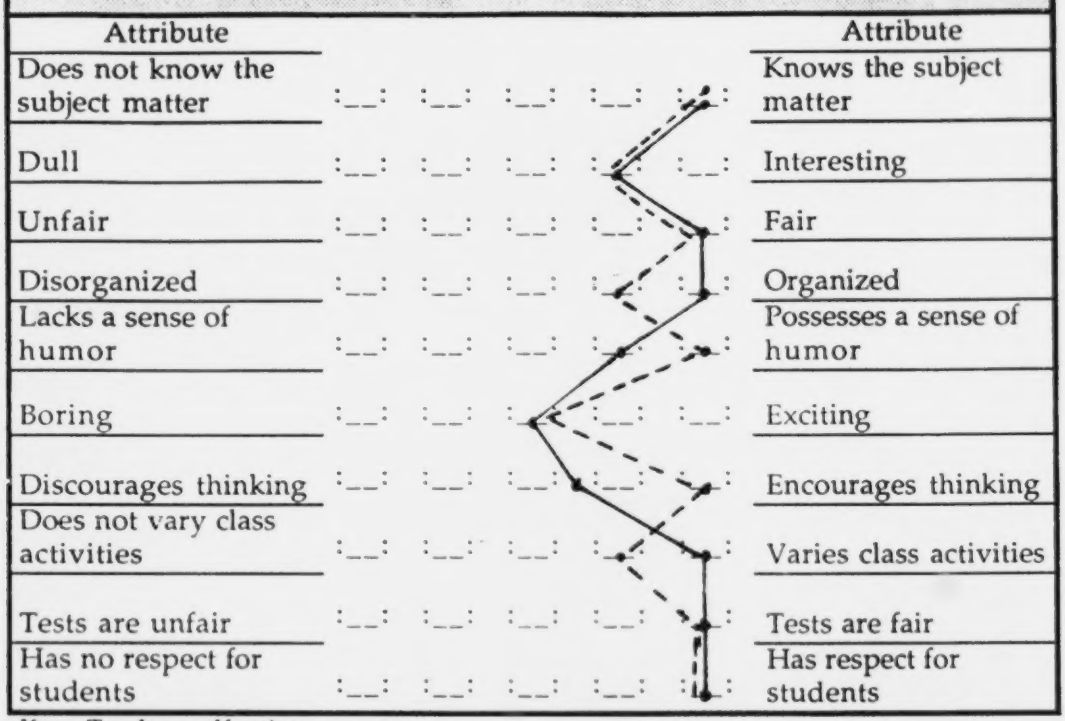
[10] During the interview, Teacher A stated that he felt evaluation was an area where he thought he needed to improve, and that he hoped to take a course in evaluation techniques next summer at a nearby university. He remarked further that he felt evaluation was one area where teachers in general were not well prepared.

Figure 1
Self and Student Ratings of Teacher Attributes for Teacher A



Teacher B

Teacher B is a 45 year old Caucasian male who has been teaching for 20 years. His students are from a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities, divided by gender into roughly 55 percent females and 45 percent males. All are eleventh graders who are required in this district to take the course. The text is the same as that used by Teacher A; however, unlike Teacher A, Teacher B does not hand out additional printed material.

Assignments consist of exercises in a workbook designed to accompany the text, written answers to questions from the text, mapwork, oral reports, and small group work. All students are required to read one non-fictional

historical work and prepare a book report on it. Homework is assigned every night.

Class activities center around (primarily) teacher lectures, accompanied by teacher-student questioning, recitation by students, and small group work. Grading is based on bi-weekly quizzes, homework assignments, the book report, unit tests, and a final examination.

Objectives for the course (stated at the outset and given to the students in writing) include:

- to present the causes and effects of events in United States History in a clear, concise, and meaningful manner;
- to examine the role of the United States in World War I, including the motivations for American involvement and its results, both for the United States and for the world;
- to analyze the Jazz Age in its myriad aspects: social, economic, cultural, and political;
- to identify those fundamental problems which led to the Great Depression, both domestic and world-wide, and understand how the New Deal both built upon American traditions and changed them;
- to evaluate the international situation in the 1920s and 1930s that created the Second world War, examine the role of the United States in that war, and explore the nature of the international situation at the end of that war;
- to analyze the emergence of the Cold War from several perspectives, and understand the nature of the ideological and power politics confrontations that defined in large part the history of the 1950s and 1960s;

•to interpret how the role of the United States as the major power in the Western Hemisphere affected the lives of both North American and Latin American citizens;

•to review and analyze the importance of race and ethnicity in the American experience in order to understand how the Civil Rights revolution both challenged and sustained American traditions;

•to understand how American society after World War II had to redefine what it meant to be an American in an age of cultural pluralism and new life styles;

•to analyze, by studying the Vietnam War, how foreign events and shifting domestic opinion called into question American institutions and the global role of the United States;

•to consider how the decade of the 1980s developed from and diverged from the American experience of over 400 years.[11]

Classroom atmosphere. Teacher B is very much in control of his class, but is quite non-threatening in his demeanor. Like Teacher A, much of Teacher B's success must be attributed to his overall demeanor. He is very relaxed, casual, non-threatening, friendly, patient, has a good sense of humor, and is well-organized. Also like Teacher A, he tries continually to reinforce the notion that everyone can do well in his class. When interviewed about his style, he remarked as follows:

> I like to consider myself as someone who cares about the kids. I think that's of primary importance. If they feel that, they'll be

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[11] This seemed like an unusually long and detailed length of objectives to give to students, and I wondered if Teacher B actually expected to achieve all of them over the course of one semester. During his interview, I queried him about this and he replied that he had formulated this long list on purpose to alert students that they would learn a lot in this course. He remarked that several parents had commented, during parents night, on the "thoroughness" of his intentions.

> more inclined to learn. I think they know I care about them. I want them to have the kind of teacher that I would want my own kids to have, and letting them know I care about how they do and what they think is a big part of that.

He is very popular with students; in fact, some of his success appears to be due to the fact that he is interested in them as people--what they like, their clothes, their after-school activities, etc. The fact that he dresses casually in a sweater and slacks and rarely wears a tie appeals to students. As one student remarked during an interview:

> *Interviewer*: How do you feel about (Teacher B)?
>
> *Student:* I like him. He knows a lot about what we like, the brands we wear, food we like, I guess, cause he has kids himself. But, he is really cool, too. You know, he dresses real casual in short sleeve shirts. That is one of the things I like about him. I have one teacher who wears a tie every day. Would you believe it? He (the other teacher) is just too stiff.

Although Teacher B is primarily a lecturer, he intersperses his lectures with questions to the class to ask about points in their reading, or for an example of something he is talking about. He uses frequent examples and tries to relate events from the past to what is happening today.[12] Although he rarely encourages one student to respond to another (of the four teachers, only Teacher A does this), he does try to encourage students to follow up and

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12 During his interview he gave me an example: "Well, right now we're dealing with the Great Crash. The kids are fascinated by the stock market, so the other day I brought in an article about how consumer confidence has declined and how that relates to the stock market and lo and behold the next day the market declined as a result of that announcement. You can then relate that back to 1927-1928.

expand on their answers to questions that he asks. When I asked him to explain his tendency to lecture, he replied:

> Well, I'm primarily a lecturer. That's what I'm comfortable with. In fact, I sometimes lecture more than I'd like. I do need to get away from being the center of attention in the classroom, but it's hard. I guess that is why I lecture more than I intend to--it is what I do best. I want to do more group work and have more student presentations, but I don't like group work just to do group work, cause too many kids in a group tend to slack off; also how do you evaluate it. I have trouble with that.

He is gentle in his questioning, patient, has good wait-time, and the students appear, for the most part, to be paying attention to what he says. All of the students in the class maintain thick notebooks and take copious notes.

It is interesting to note that Teacher B indicated, during the interview, that he was a physical education teacher for seven years before turning to the social studies.

> Lecturing was the way I was taught. It is funny because PE is all activity based--that is really all we do, you know, but it didn't seem to carry over for me into social studies. I guess I am most comfortable with lecturing, and I really think that is how to best get over the material. There is a body of information that I think students need to learn--that is my responsibility, that and motivating them, and I think lecturing is the way I am most comfortable in helping them to learn this material.[13]

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[13] It is interesting that the one criticism of Teacher B voiced by students was that they felt he sometimes gave them too much information to learn all at once, and that they wished he would go a bit slower and discuss some of the points he brought out in the lectures a bit more.

Evaluation. Teacher B gives a quiz on each chapter the students have read. Each quiz consists of about one-fourth terms to define, one-half multiple-choice, and one-fourth essay (one or two) questions. The quizzes test mainly for recall of information. Like Teacher A, he also gives a unit test, but unlike A, his unit test consists solely of short answer and essay questions.[14] His unit test questions are quite high level, requiring students to explain, to summarize information, to put ideas together, etc. He also gains some idea of what and how much students are learning by questioning them on important points he has been stressing in class.

Teacher B was asked to rate himself on the same set of polar adjectives given to Teacher A, as were his students. A comparison of the two ratings (the student ratings represent the class average on each attribute) are shown in Figure 2 on the next page.

Figure 2 reveals that Teacher B, if anything, rates himself slightly lower on a few of the variables than do his students. As was the case with Teacher A, both Teacher B and his students rate him at or near the positive end of the differential on all of the variables shown. They rate him a bit lower on interesting and exciting, and a bit higher on knowledge of his subject matter and encouraging student thinking, than he does himself.

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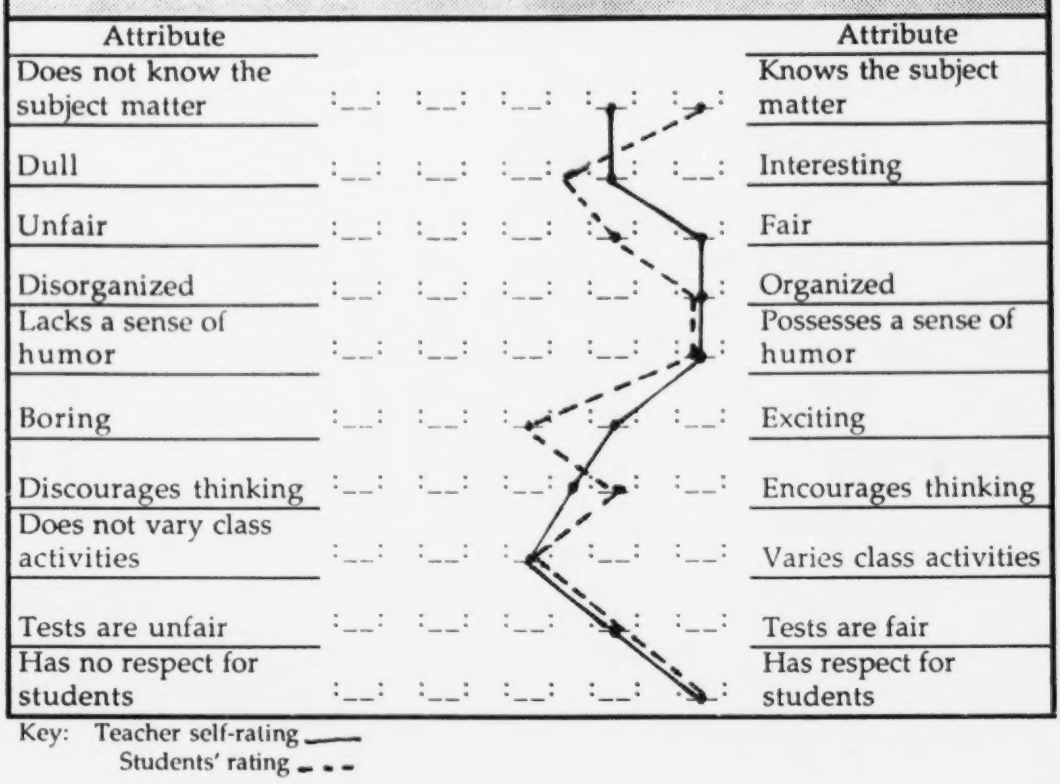
[14] When I asked him about this during his interview, he remarked that he wanted students to learn how to organize their thoughts and that he felt this helped them to do it.

Figure 2
Self and Student Ratings of Teacher Attributes for Teacher B



Key: Teacher self-rating ——
Students' rating - - -

Teacher C

Teacher C is a 56 year old Caucasian male who has been teaching for 30 years. He is the oldest of the four teachers observed, and has been teaching for the longest time. His students also come from a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities, and are divided by gender into roughly two-thirds females and one-third males. All are eleventh graders who are required in this district to take the course. The text is the same used by Teachers A and B; he occasionally will distribute xeroxed handouts which contain additional reading material, or some sort of problem or exercise for students to take home to complete.

Assignments consist almost exclusively of written answers to questions from the text, mapwork, and (occasionally) some small group work. He requires no term projects or book reports, although he does frequently suggest that students read a particular book that he believes will enlighten them further on a topic under study (e.g., *The Jungle*, by Upton Sinclair).

Class activities center almost exclusively around the rapid questioning of students by the teacher, interspersed with brief commentary. Grading is based on the homework assignments, unit tests, and a required final examination. He also grades students on their class participation.

Course objectives were not prepared by Teacher C for this course. When I queried him about this in his interview, he remarked as follows:

> I'm going to play it by ear, since this is the first time I have taught this particular course. Essentially, I intend to cover the last half of the textbook, and try to help students to understand the material. Next semester, I will have objectives, definitely.

Classroom atmosphere. The atmosphere in Teacher C's class is considerably different than the one created in the classrooms of Teachers A and B. C is much less relaxed in his manner, more frenetic, always moving about the room, rapidly firing questions at the class, and then returning to the chalkboard to write down a key word or phrase. This rapid-fire questioning of students makes many of them uneasy, and leads to a fair amount of anxiety; this is furthered by the fact that Teacher C has very little wait-time. He frequently asks a second question almost immediately on top of the first, leaving students little time to answer. As a result, he often either gets no

reply from students, or answers the question himself.[15] He also often fails to tie his questions together, to relate one question and answer to another, often leaving students with the impression (as they revealed in their interviews) that the information they were learning in C's class was fragmented and devoid of connections.

Although quite businesslike ("All right, students, settle down, let's get cracking!"), Teacher C is friendly and encouraging. He is not disliked by students, but neither is he extremely popular. During an interview, one student described him as follows:

> Well, he's okay. He's sort of an average teacher, I guess. I have never heard anyone say anything bad about him. His classes are okay, but they aren't too interesting. He asks a lot of questions and that is good, but he doesn't always give us enough time to answer them. I wish he would be a bit more patient. Lots of times he answers the questions himself, you know, so if you just stay quiet, you can get away without having to answer, because he doesn't push you and he'll give you the answer.

Teacher C is much less relaxed and less casual than either Teacher A or Teacher B (C always wears a tie!). He knows his subject matter, however, and is very confident that he can help students understand it. In his interview, he made the following remark:

> I love history! My greatest enjoyment comes from class discussions when my students are well informed and

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[15] C's questioning of students has to be seen to be appreciated. He will ask several questions one after another, hardly pausing for breath. Students literally are bombarded by as many as ten questions a minute. Many questions, accordingly, go unanswered or are forgotten.

enthusiastic and I can get them to debate ideas with me or with each other.

Teacher C admitted that he is disappointed when he does not get debate and discussion. His questioning style, however, seems to discourage students from responding to his questions. It seems likely that his level of expectation often results in a sense of frustration, which he communicates, in subtle ways, to his students. He admitted, when interviewed, that he didn't think the students he had today were as serious or as capable as those he has had in the past. He remarked:

Teacher C: Frankly, they (students) just aren't as good as they were in the old days. They don't write.

Interviewer: How can you tell?

Teacher C: I've kept their essays over the years. You can compare what students write today with what they wrote 15 or so years ago. They aren't as informed, not as long, not as well expressed. Things change, and I try to keep up, but student skills, at least in writing, are deteriorating.

Learning Activities. With the exception of scheduled tests, each class meeting is organized around lecture/discussion and (occasionally) small group work. The sequence is the same almost every day--teacher questioning, interspersed with brief lectures, using illustrative examples, for the entire period. He described what he did as follows:

Generally, I put my outline on the board, tell the students to leave space, and then I fill in with my stories and give them facts, etc. There is a reservoir of facts, people and events that shape a period you are studying and students should know this. So I give it to them--they can't just pick it up on their own.

Occasionally, he will break the class into small groups to discuss a question or work on a problem he gives them to consider.

Teacher C believes strongly in the importance of repeated questioning with feedback as soon as possible. He sees small group work as an opportunity for exploring various ideas of different class members. Throughout the questioning of students in class, examples are given from daily life.

Classroom atmosphere. The atmosphere in C's class is best described as formal and businesslike. He chats with students before and after the class and makes frequent use of personalized comments and humor, but it is clear that he is (and intends to be) in control. Students are free to raise questions, but rarely do they respond to one another, or to participate in humorous exchanges. There is no doubt that the teacher is in charge and that students are expected to attend to what is going on, and almost all give every appearance of doing so. Classroom activities are highly structured as to form and content (e.g., when the class is broken down into smaller workgroups, they have definite assignments).

Teacher C demonstrates a high level of energy and enthusiasm during class meetings. He stated that his enthusiasm and interest is maintained primarily by the diversity of students, which he enjoys, and by the evidence of learning that he observes and infers from completed student assignments.

Evaluation. Teacher C gives a quiz every week, consisting of about 10 multiple-choice questions. The quizzes test mainly for recall of information. In addition, he gives a unit test, consisting of about 50 objective (true-false, multiple-choice, some matching) questions. He does not give essay questions as part of his tests, but rather as take-home assignments about once a

month.[16] The take-home essay questions require higher level thinking. Like Teacher A, he also gains some idea of what and how much they are learning by questioning them on important points he has been stressing in class.[17]

Teacher C also was asked to rate himself on the set of polar adjectives given to Teachers A and B, as were his students. A comparison of the two ratings (the student ratings represent the class average on each attribute) are shown in Figure 3 on the next page.

C's perception of himself appears to be somewhat less positive than how he is perceived by his students, although in general, both he and his students rate him positively on most of the variables shown. His students rate him higher on fairness, organization, and sense of humor than he rates himself, and markedly higher on the fairness of his tests.[18] They rate him slightly lower on variety, interesting, knowledge of his subject matter, and encouraging student thinking than he does himself.

Teacher D

Teacher D is a 42 year old Asian (Chinese) female who has been teaching for 20 years. She is the youngest of the four teachers observed, and the only female. Her students also come from a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities, and are divided by gender roughly into three-fourths females and one-fourth males. All are eleventh graders who are required in this district to take the course. The text is the same as that used by Teachers A, B, and C.

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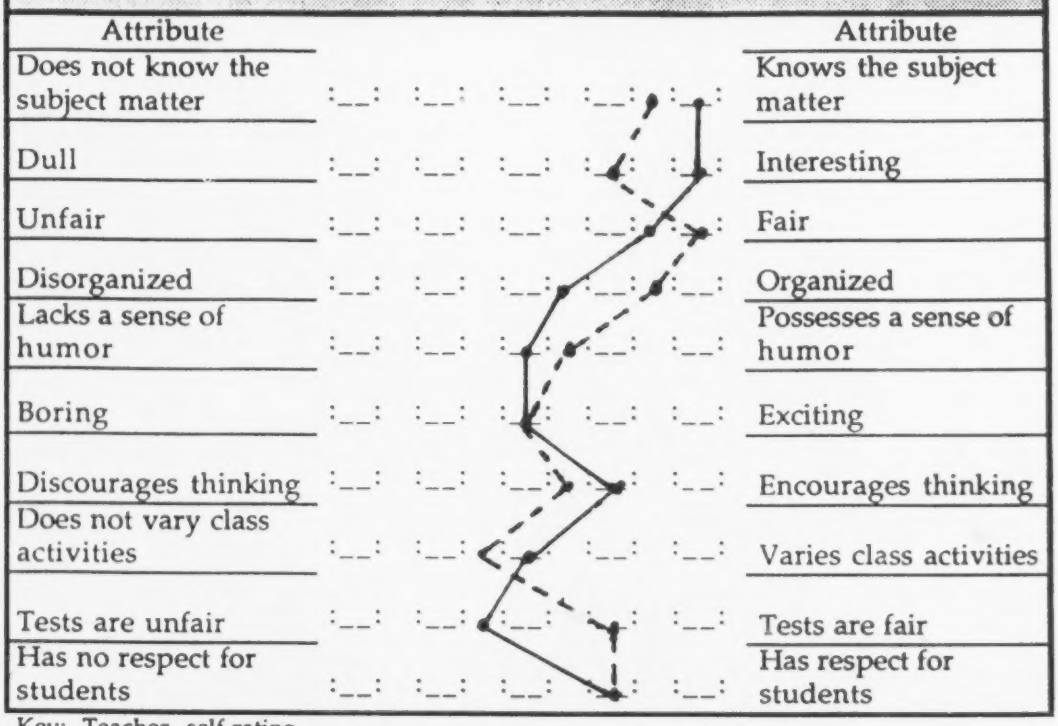
16 He remarked during his interview that he does not think it fair to give essay questions in tests taken in class, since the length of the class periods are only 45 minutes.

17 Teacher C also remarked that he felt evaluation was an area where he was not well-prepared.

18 During his interview, he admitted that he sometimes asked students questions that went beyond their reading, and that this was not fair. His students evidently did not appear to share this view.

Figure 3
Self and Student Ratings of Teacher Attributes for Teacher C



Key: Teacher self-rating ——
Students' rating - - -

Assignments consist almost exclusively of written answers to questions from the text, mapwork, and (occasionally) some small group work. She requires no term projects or book reports, although she does require that students keep a notebook containing all of their class notes and their returned homework.

Class activities center almost exclusively around D's lectures. She spends a considerable amount of time in most class periods going over with students the procedures she expects them to follow in maintaining their notebooks, heading their papers, handing in work, taking notes, and the like.

Grading is based on the homework assignments, unit tests, and a final examination.

Course objectives were not given to students at the outset of the semester. When queried about this in the interview, Teacher D remarked as follows:

> *Teacher D:* I don't give out a set of objectives for the course, because my objectives change as I go along. Instead, I give a brief syllabus, a list of topics we will read about and discuss. This doesn't mean that I don't know what I want, I do, but I don't see too much value in giving the students some formal list of objectives. It doesn't mean much to them.
>
> *Interviewer:* What are some of your objectives?
>
> *Teacher D:* Naturally, I want the kids to learn something about American history, but I really am most interested in them learning some basic skills--how to take good notes and how to write and speak well, since they will need this in college. After all, this is an academic high school, and they need to learn some academic skills and become proficient in using them to do well in their courses here. Kids can't write and the only way to help them learn to write is to give them a lot to write about, so I have them take many pages of notes and turn them in. Actually, what I want at first is lots of pages of notes--quantity, even at the expense of quality, since they need to practice writing. They won't learn to write otherwise.

Classroom atmosphere. The atmosphere in Teacher D's class is different than that created in the classrooms of any of the other three teachers. The atmosphere is very formal. She stands behind (actually leans on) a

lectern during almost the entire class period, rarely straying from behind it to move around the class, or to approach a student. When she lectures, she reads slowly, almost rhythmically, from her notes (placed on top of the lectern), and the students do their best to take down, practically verbatim, almost everything she says. The room is absolutely still while she is lecturing, with students bending over their notes writing furiously. Only a rare student-student exchange is observed once Ms. D begins lecturing. Her insistence on a large quantity of notes caused some students to protest. On one occasion, the following exchange took place:

> *Student:* Why do we have to take so many notes? I try to take down what I think is important!
>
> *Ms. D.* I really am not interested in you trying to select things to write down right now. I want you to take a lot of notes so that you will learn to write and learn how to take notes under pressure. You will need this in college.[19]

Although quite formal, Teacher D is friendly with students, and frequently inquires about their welfare and activities in which they are engaged outside of class. She is disliked by some students because they view her as too strict in what she demands. Several students like this emphasis on doing things in a certain way, however. During an interview, one student, typical of many, described Teacher D as follows:

> This is a good class. Ms. D tries to teach you something, but she wants things done her way. Some kids don't like her because

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[19] During her interview, she remarked: "I spend so much time on this (taking notes) cause I am working toward autonomy, and I think this is the best way to develop it. I start off very structured and as they learn what I want--the procedures and format that I expect, it eventually becomes like second nature to many of them. This improves their writing skills, too. You can't learn to write if you don't write, and by having them take lots of notes, my students learn to write.

> they think she is too demanding, wanting things just a certain way. She's too much of a perfectionist. They say she is too tough and mean. But I like her, because its kind of a challenge to do things exactly the way she wants. Like I thought I had done everything just as she wanted for my notebook, you know, and I turned it in and so when I got it back, I was really shocked to find I hadn't done it (as Ms. D had specified). But I think I have it now and I won't deviate one bit from what she requires next time.

Teacher D is the least relaxed in manner of the four teachers I observed, but she is by far the most casual in her dress. She often goes jogging before she comes to school (her first class does not begin until 8:45, and she will come to school, and teach, in her jogging suit).

Learning Activities. With the exception of scheduled tests, each class meeting is organized around Teacher D's lectures. Rarely is there any discussion of the reading assignments (given every night), although there is a fair amount of recitation, with students being asked to read aloud one of the previous night's homework questions and then read the answer they have written. Occasionally, students are divided into small groups to work on a map project. Lectures occur every day, with students primarily taking notes as they listen to what Ms. D has to say. It should be noted that her lectures are interesting, in that she often focuses on how the ordinary people of the time lived. As one student remarked:

> Her lectures are interesting. She tells us about just average people who lived at that time, women, peasants. . . I like to listen to her talk. You get the feeling that history is about real people

too, not just Kings and Queens and Presidents and Generals, you know.

Teacher D believes strongly in an orderly, teacher-run classroom. She is not a martinet, nor overly strict, but she is demanding and requires attention and respect from her students. She respects them in turn, is courteous, friendly and polite, but she rarely involves them in activities that require something more than listening on their part. or reciting. She, definitely, is the central force in her classroom.

Classroom atmosphere. The atmosphere in this class is best described similarly to that found in Teacher C's classroom--formal and businesslike. Ms. D does chat with a few students before and after class and asks them, occasionally, how they are doing, but it is clear that she is in charge. Students feel free to raise questions, but rarely do they respond to one another, or joke with one another or Ms D. There is no doubt that the teacher is in charge and that the students are expected to attend to her lectures, and almost all give every appearance of doing so.

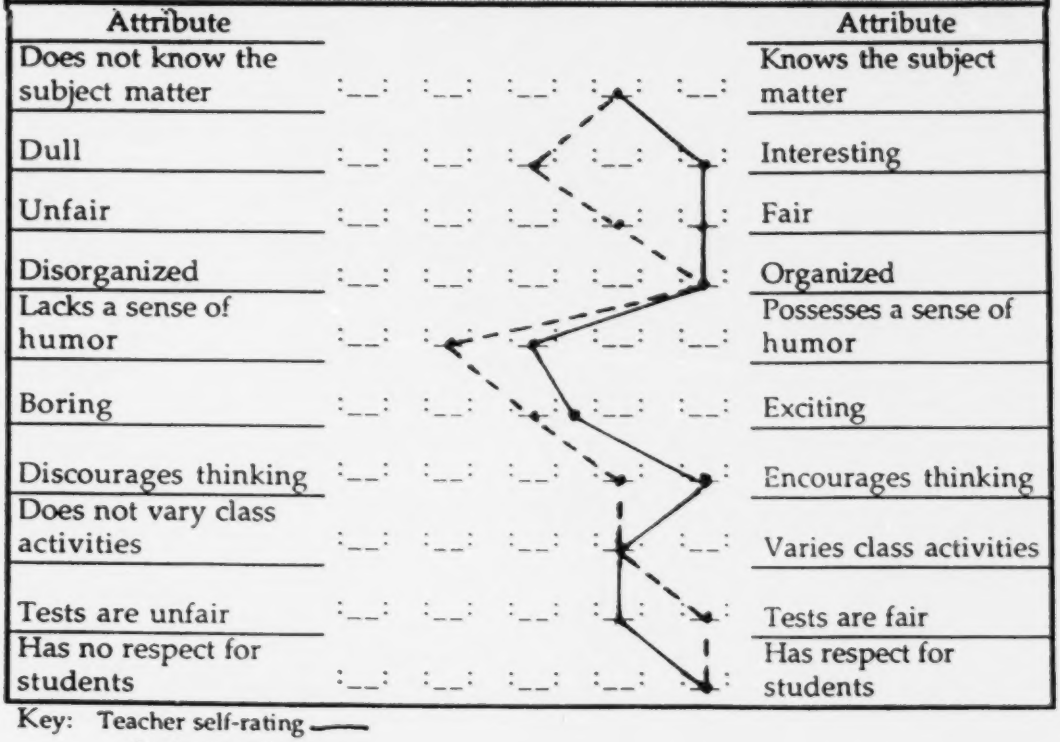
Teacher D demonstrates a fairly low level of energy--not apathy, but more a quiet, professional demeanor during class meetings. When I asked her during an interview how she felt she was perceived by students, she replied "mixed."

Evaluation. Teacher D gives a quiz about every two weeks, consisting of about 20 multiple-choice and short answer questions (usually terms to define). The quizzes test mainly for recall of information. In addition, she gives a unit test, consisting of about 25 multiple-choice, and two essay questions, from which students are to select one to write about. The objective questions test for recall and recognition of information, but the essay questions require higher level thinking. She also grades students on their

notebooks (turned in every week), and their class participation. She gives "extra credit" (marked in a small notebook) for a particularly neat notebook, or a complete answer given when called upon in class.

Teacher D also was asked to rate herself on the set of polar adjectives given to Teachers A, B, and C, as were her students. A comparison of the two ratings (the student ratings represent the class average on each attribute) are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4
Self and Student Ratings of Teacher Attributes for Teacher D



Key: Teacher self-rating ——
Students' rating – – –

Ms. D is rated less positively by her students on almost all of the variables shown than she rates herself, although the ratings were still, overall, toward the positive end of the differential. Both Ms. D and her

students agreed in their ratings with regard to knowledge and organization of the subject matter, and showing respect for students. They rated her lower on fairness, exciting and encouraging student thinking, and considerably lower on interesting and sense of humor.

In sum, although these four teachers differ in a number of ways, they also display a number of similar behaviors and utilize a number of similar techniques that help students learn. All four are effective instructors, although in varying degrees.[20] Let us look first, therefore, at their differences .

How Do They Differ?

Questionnaires were administered to all the students at the end of the four months, in which they were asked to indicate whether various activities (e.g., weekly discussion of current events; student-led discussions; small group work) occurred in their classroom over the course of the semester frequently, occasionally or never. Table 2 presents the most frequent response for each activity.

Table 2 reveals that a considerable variety of activities occur in these teachers' classrooms, although no particular activity tends to predominate for any of the four.[21] Teacher A, by far, employs the greatest variety of activities, including discussions, audio-visual materials (many of his own making), and group work. Although he breaks the class into small groups frequently and encourages student-student discussions, he also, on occasion, will give a brief lecture. Teacher C employs a Socratic-like questioning style almost all of the time, although he, too, on occasion will lecture or place students into a small group activity. Teachers B and D lecture most of the time, although they also on occasion lead discussions. Teacher D often spends a considerable part of a

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20 Teachers A and B, overall, were rated more positively than were Teachers C and D by both students and observers.

21 This was supported by the classroom observations.

class period discussing the procedures she expects students to follow (as compared to discussing the subject matter of the course) before beginning a lecture.

Table 2
How Frequently Various Classroom Activities Occurred

Activity	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Teacher lecture	Occasionally	Frequently	Occasionally	Frequently
Discussions led by teacher	Frequently	Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally
Films	Occasionally	Occasionally	Never	Never
Filmstrips	Frequently	Never	Never	Never
Slides	Frequently	Never	Never	Never
Use of transparencies by teacher	Frequently	Never	Never	Never
Small group work	Frequently	Occasionally	Occasionally	Frequently
Student-led discussions	Frequently	Occasionally	Never	Never
Debates	Occasionally	Never	Occasionally	Neverf
Student presentations	Occasionally	Occasionally	Occasionally	Occasionally
Silent reading in class	Never	Never	Never	Frequently
Reading from text by students in class	Never	Never	Never	Never
Guest speakers	Never	Never	Never	Never
Dittoed worksheets	Never	Never	Never	Never

In addition, for those activities which they described as being typical, students were asked to rate the quality of the activity. Table 3 reveals that all classroom activities received a mean rating of 3.0 or better on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). The activities of teachers A and B were, in the main, rated higher than those of teachers C and D. Student interviews revealed, however, that even when students gave a specific activity a relatively low rating (i.e., a rating of 3.0), they did not consider this a particularly low rating in any absolute sense, but only in comparison to the other activities they were experiencing in class. It should be noted that neither Teacher C nor Teacher D

Table 3
Student Ratings of Typical Classroom Activities (Means)

Activity	Teacher A	Teacher B	Teacher C	Teacher D
Lectures by instructor	4.5	4.5	3.5	3.0
Discussions led by instructor	4.0	4.0	4.5	3.0
Films	4.0	4.0	na	na
Filmstrips	5.0	na	na	na
Slides	5.0	na	na	na
Use of gransparencies by instructor	4.0	na	na	na
Small group work	5.0	4.0	3.5	4.0
Student-led discussions	4.0	4.5	na	na
Debates	4.0	na	na	na
Student presentations	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.5
Silent reading in class	na	na	na	3.0
Reading from text by students in class	na	na	na	na
Guest speakers	na	na	na	na
Dittoed worksheets	na	na	na	na

received an activity rating higher than 4.0; that Teacher B received the highest rating with regard to lectures; and that only Teacher A received any mean ratings of 5.0.

What needs to be stressed, however, is that these teachers cannot be pigeonholed into neat and narrow categories. Although they tend to prefer a particular teaching style, they are not *just* lecturers or questioners or small-group advocates, but rather more or less eclectics who, when necessary, diverge from their normal routine when they believe an alternate activity is necessary to accomplish objectives they have in mind.

A related point to emphasize is that, although these teachers varied in both ability and how they were perceived by both students and observers, they

each utilized several similar, even identical techniques, and displayed a number of behaviors that were observed to have (and which students identified as having) a positive effect in the classroom--that is, that were perceived by both students and observers as helping students learn the subject matter and keeping them interested in what was being taught. Many of the techniques were also identified by the teachers themselves during their interviews as "things they did that they thought contributed to student learning." These behaviors and techniques are described briefly below.[22]

Frequently Used Techniques or Displayed Behaviors

(O,I) •At the beginning of the semester, the teacher states that it is up to each student to determine how well they do in the class. They must take personal responsibility (A,D).

(O,S) •The teacher makes him or herself available on a one-to-one basis, both during and after class meetings, for discussion of personal concerns and questions (A,B,C,D).

(O,I,S) •The teacher designs in-class activities that require active involvement and interaction of students with each other (A,B,C,D).

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22 Triangulation analysis was applied by classifying each behavior or technique by data source (observation=O, instructor interview=I, and student interview=S). The letters immediately following each behavior or technique indicate which teachers used it. The letters immediately preceding each behavior or technique indicate which data source *independently* identified them. "Independently" means that the behavior or technique was mentioned in an interview without direct questioning by the investigator(s), or it was observed prior to being mentioned in an interview. For example, the third technique (designing in-class activities that require active involvement) was identified independently through both observation and in a teacher interview. Additional verification was obtained through dependent identification, that is, by identifying the behavior or technique either by direct questioning in interview(s) or through observing the behavior or technique after it had been identified in an interview. All behaviors and techniques were identified independently or non-independently by at least two data sources.

(O,I,S) •The teacher expresses interest in what is being learned (A,B,C,D).

(O, I, S) •The teacher frequently draws analogies between what is being discussed or has been read and current events (A,B,C).

(O,I,S) •The teacher makes frequent use of humor, sometimes by telling personal anecdotes, often in talking about his personal life (A,B,C).

(O,I) •The teacher encourages students, at an early class meeting, to form small support groups (n=4 or 5) and exchange telephone numbers so that they have a partner they can call on a regular basis if they need to discuss questions they may have about an assignment (D).

(O,S) •The teacher repeatedly encourages students to continue asking for explanations until they understand. The teacher repeats explanations and illustrations several times and, usually, is willing to wait while students re-formulate their questions or statements (A,B, D).

(O) •The teacher makes a point of waiting for a student response, telling students to remind him if he or she doesn't wait long enough (B).

(O,I,S) •The teacher emphasizes thinking rather than merely restating statements from the textbook (A,B,C).

(O,I) •The teacher asks students to look for patterns and relationships in what they read (e.g., "How might the actions of the United States just prior to the Spanish-American War be another example of self-interest?") (A).

(O) •The teacher frequently tells students when to take notes, and when just to listen (A,B,D).

(O,I,S) •The teacher makes use of "tailor-made" handouts in addition to the textbook (A).

(O,I,S) •The teacher relates subject matter to personal experience (e.g., stock fluctuations in today's market when talking about the Great Crash of 1929) (A,B,C).

(I,S) •The teacher's grading policy is clear from the outset (A,D).

(O,S) •During the first class meeting, the teacher describes some of his interests and what he hopes students will learn from the class as a way of making students feel comfortable and relaxed (A,B).

(O,I,S) •The teacher asks questions that require students to think about what they are reading (A,B C).

(O) •When the teacher makes a mistake, he or she publicly admits it. (A,B,C,D).

(O,I,S) •The teacher uses, whenever possible, examples from current events to illustrate an historical concept (A,B,C).

(O,I,S) •The teacher uses a variety of modalities (visual, spatial, verbal) in trying to explain the subject matter (A).

(O,I) •The teacher arranges students into small groups, and then frequently rearranges them so as to encourage wider student interaction (A,D).

(O,S) •The teacher learns the first names of students quickly, in order to foster informality and to facilitate calling on them in class (A,B,C,D).

(O,I,S) •The teacher deliberately calls on reticent students to foster attention and class participation (A,B,C,D).

(O,I,S) •The teacher asks questions frequently to check understanding (A,B,C,D).

(O,I,S) •The teacher does not let small group work go on too long, which minimizes boredom (A).

(O) •The teacher smiles a lot (A,B,C)

(O,I) •The teacher deliberately makes eye contact to establish personal connections (A B).

The above present several behaviors and techniques that these teachers used in the course of their daily teaching. Not all of these techniques, of course, were employed every day, nor were all of them employed by each teacher. Nevertheless, they suggest some of the things that effective teachers do to help students learn, and possibilities for novices to try to see if they can increase their effectiveness.

Summary

These teachers displayed many similarities, therefore, which contributed to student learning. Each was observed, on at least one (and sometimes more than one) occasion, to do certain things that, in the opinion of the observers, contributed to student learning and to the maintenance of a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. They would:

•demonstrate a willingness to get to know their students as individuals.

•try to tailor-make at least some learning activities to fit their students' interests and abilities.

•try to create a relaxed, but task-oriented, classroom.

•reveal their personal interests, biases, and opinions to students on occasion.

•demonstrate a considerable enthusiasm for teaching. All were visibly enthusiastic about some aspects of the subject matter almost every day. This was true even of Teacher D, who although quiet and reserved compared to the other three, indicated interest in the subject matter through an occasional remark like "Isn't that interesting," or "Well, what do you know about that!"

•convey the attitude that the subject matter of the course is important and that students will like it and be able to learn it.

• tell a joke (often a very corny one).

•listen attentively to student comments, answers, and questions.

•pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues from students.

•give prompt feedback.

•assign homework every night.

•ask questions that make students think.

•relate course content to daily happenings as reported in the media.

•explain things clearly.

•use a variety of modes of presentation, including verbal and written diagrams and schematics.

Implications

The information collected on these four social studies teachers, with respect both to their overall teaching style and the specific techniques they use, and the behaviors they display in the course of their daily teaching tends to validate some of the perceptions of other observers concerning the behaviors that distinguish effective from ineffective teachers at the high school level (e.g., see Berliner, 1985). On the other hand, some of our findings raise issues that are not commonly considered in the continuing dialogue concerning effective teaching.

It is hardly surprising that these "good" teachers have classes that are business-like, yet informal. Nor that these they are friendly and concerned about their students' welfare. Nor that they are good at presenting information clearly to students and explaining that which students do not understand. Nor that they provide frequent and conscientious feedback on student work, and work hard at maintaining an instructional pace

appropriate to their students. Nor that they design materials appropriate to the ability level of their students and that they are perceived as fair. Some of the specific techniques they use to achieve these conditions have, for years, been recommended by the writers of social studies methods books (Armstrong, 1980; Banks, 1991; Ehman, et al, 1974; Fraenkel, 1980). They include telling students they can succeed; asking students questions about the reading material; engaging students in discussion; giving examples from daily life; waiting a sufficient time for students to respond; modeling behaviors desired in students; varying the activities in which students are asked to participate while in class; using humor to make students feel at ease; and using a variety of sensory modalities in presentations.

Several other characteristics and behaviors emerge, however, that have not received as much attention in the literature on teaching. The first is the extent to which Teacher A tries deliberately to make eye-contact with students in order to hold their attention, and to maintain classroom control. He also deliberately talks about his family and his personal life, something that all of his students who were interviewed remarked about in a positive way. Teacher A goes even further by making himself available to discuss personal anxieties as they are explored by students, and to share his personal views and feelings with his students. He also is very tolerant of interruptions by students.

Second, Teacher D tries to learn as much as possible about her students' backgrounds, so that she can tailor classroom activities to relate to what she has taken the time to learn about their backgrounds.

Third, Teachers A, B, and C place great emphasis on the thought processes engaged in by students, not only by emphasizing the importance of process (i.e., thinking) as well as product, but also by encouraging and helping

students to explore their own thought processes as they discuss the material in their reading assignments.

Fourth, Teachers A and C, and to a lesser extent Teacher B, consciously try to promote social interaction among their students through small group work. Teacher A establishes on-going groups to facilitate mutual assistance as well as socialization. Teacher B mixes up the membership of the various groups frequently in order to broaden the circle of acquaintances.

Fifth, both Teachers A and B consciously attend to non-verbal cues as indications of confusion and/or anxiety and repeat or restate comments and questions accordingly.

Two of these characteristics require skills not normally expected of high school teachers. Helping students explore their thinking processes requires a skill that cannot be acquired without experience nor (probably) without training. The importance attached to these aspects of teaching by these teachers suggests that attention be given to such training if we are serious about improving the quality of teaching that occurs in our high schools. The remaining attributes are seemingly well within the experience of most teachers, should they be willing to expend the necessary effort.

Two additional findings seem worthy of note. All four of these teachers have instructional goals that go considerably beyond the learning of subject matter alone. All see see their course as having an important impact on the lives of their students--by helping them develop both intellectual and emotional skills applicable to their lives and by expanding their "world view."

Second, all four express interest not only in the content of their course, but also in the learning processes of their students. It seems likely that this

interest is important in helping them maintain their enthusiasm for teaching.

McNeil (1988) has identified a number of defensive teaching strategies that teachers sometimes use to maintain order in their classroom and ensure that they control what goes on. They include the fragmentation of knowledge (teaching by means of lists of facts rather than emphasizing concepts and ideas); tending to mystify information (indicating that students should learn about a particular topic, yet not discussing it with them in depth, thereby often shrouding it in mystery); omission (omitting altogether the discussion of controversial topics); and simplification (assuring students that what they were giving them to learn would not be difficult) (pp. 434-437). To their credit, not one of these four teachers used any of these strategies. They tried to discuss concepts and ideas rather than stressing isolated facts; they presented information in depth; they did not shrink from discussing controversial issues when they arose; and they stressed that much of what was to be learned might at times be difficult (although they also stressed that the students could learn it and it would be interesting).

These teachers are not perfect. They can be faulted, to varying degrees, for what they do not do, or what they could do better. Because Teacher A is usually so clear in his explanations, he sometimes assumes students understand a point when they do not, and fails to check on their understanding through questioning or by some other means. Teacher B does not have enough variety--he lectures too much, failing to give students an opportunity to discuss some of the material he lectures about. Teacher C asks too many questions, without giving students time to answer one question before he asks another. He simply doesn't wait long enough. Teacher D is too structured, spending an inordinate amount of time on procedures at the

expense of classroom discussion (and student understanding) of the subject matter at hand.

Teachers B and D might lecture less and discuss more. Teacher C could ask fewer questions and give students more time to think about and discuss the ones he does ask. All four teachers might tie together the specific facts they present more frequently. All four might pose some hypotheses for students to investigate rather than usually being the main disseminator of information. All four might promote a greater amount of student-student interaction in class.

Nevertheless, these teachers, each in their own way, represent a partial picture of what effective social studies teachers do on a more-or-less daily basis in their classrooms. This is not to say that what they do is what all should do. It is to say that much of what they do is worthy of consideration by those who wish to improve their classroom effectiveness.

Implications

No attempt has been made, nor is there any intent, to suggest that the findings of this study are typical of what happens in most social studies classrooms. The results of this study were obtained by observing only four classes in one school district in one western state. However, a wealth of data were collected, and this data does provide much information for other social studies professionals (and especially novices) to consider in terms of the degree to which the data may be applicable to their situation. Social studies continues to be placed by students among the least liked of school subjects (Fouts, 1989; Haladyna & Thomas, 1979; Morrissett, 1982; Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985; Schug & Berry, 1984). If the profession is to assess accurately the nature of instruction in social studies classrooms in order to determine where, when, and how changes might be made and implemented, we need detailed and accurate descriptions of what is

happening in these classrooms. The findings of this study present some information in this regard.

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